

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

June 17, 2005

Mr. Anthony Principi
Chairman
BRAC Commission
The Polk Building, Suite 600 and 625
2521 South Clark Street
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Chairman Principi:

We encourage you to rescind the recent Department of Defense (DoD) recommendation to the BRAC Commission moving the 142nd Fighter Wing's F-15 aircraft from the Portland Air National Guard Base to New Orleans, Louisiana and Atlantic City, New Jersey. We believe it compromises the security of the Northwestern United States.

The President's National Security Strategy, National Defense Strategy and National Military Strategy all recognize that our first priority must be to protect the homeland. The 142nd Fighter Wing in Portland currently protects 11 million American citizens in the Pacific Northwest. Its present position allows them to provide continuous air defense and air superiority capabilities from northern California to Canada, a range no other base in the area can cover. Reducing this region's capacity for response from fifteen F-15s to two is a dangerous proposal that exposes citizens of the Pacific Northwest to unnecessary risk.

The 9-11 Commission recommended that the United States fund an increase reserve presence within this growing Pacific Northwest region. Under the BRAC recommendations, the Northwest is the only region of the country that would realize a reduction in air defense capability; lowering its response capability below September 11th, 2001 levels.

The Pacific Northwest's large population centers are forecast to face substantial growth in the coming decade. Already, the region experiences hundreds of international aircraft departing, landing or flying over the airspace on a daily basis; including the majority of trans-Pacific maritime routes. Further, the Pacific Northwest is the only region of the country within missile range of Pacific-rim threat nations, making air defense capability critical to the Homeland Security mission of the entire country. The proposed reduction to two fighter jets on alert makes it virtually impossible to provide sufficient protection of the region.

Additionally, no data has been provided to support the potential for cost savings from the recommended realignment, nor have we been apprised of what data was used to craft this recommendation. On average, the Air National Guard fighter units are 10% more efficient than the active components and the 142nd Fighter Wing is 20% more efficient.

The Air National Guard also stands to lose a highly skilled labor force of pilots and maintenance personnel as they will not likely move with the aircraft. This has the potential to increase the cost of additional training. In fact, we have been presented with analysis that

suggests the recommended realignment will come at an overall cost to taxpayers of \$1.6 million dollars. We urge the Commission to carefully consider accurate and comprehensive data with regard to the full cost of this training recommendation and to provide us with that complete data.

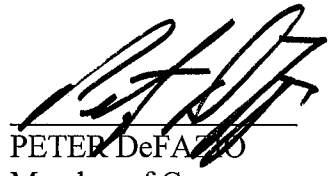
We acknowledge your job is difficult and the need for adjusting fiscal investments into initiatives that will produce a stronger defense. However, we do not believe that realignment of the 142nd Fighter Wing accomplishes that goal. The BRAC recommendation to move the 142nd Fighter Wing from Portland, Oregon is not cost effective and compromises the homeland security of the entire Pacific Northwest. For these reasons, we urge you to reject the BRAC realignment proposal.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



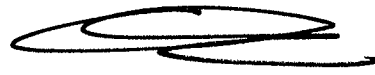
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